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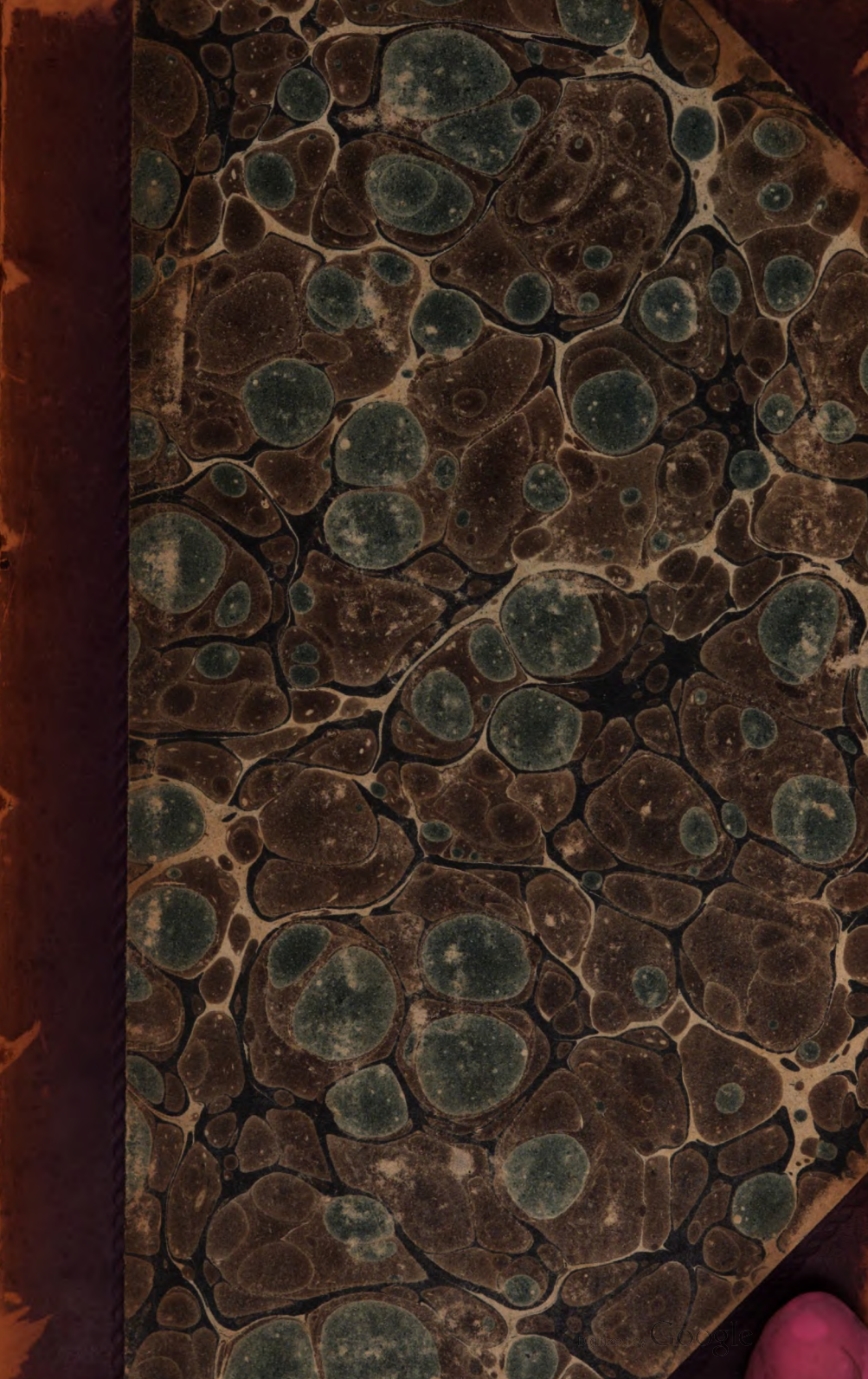

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J. 1829

NAPOLEON.

IN SIX CANTOS.

BY RICHARD WHIFFIN.

Quench'd, in dark clouds of slumber, lie
The terror of his beak, the lightning of his eye.

LONDON:
SMITH, ELDER AND CO. 65, CORNHILL.
1828.

596.

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ODE TO NAPOLEON.

CANTO I.

O THOU, 'midst awful fissures dwelling,
  Round which the sea-god's terrors roll,
Say, will the Muse's whispers, telling
  Thine exploits, sooth thy captive soul?
Thy foes from former joys debar,—
The trophied field, the pomp of war;—
  But what, against the Muse, their arts avail?
Or surges bellowing on the em'rald deep?
Or mounds, emboss'd on many a threat'ning steep?—
  Nor these, nor floating forts, can still the shell,
  Which Helen shall resound, thro' ev'ry winding dell.

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Muse, the lofty lay begin!
What, tho' his power and state be flown?
Shall music's stream be pour'd alone to him,
Who wears secure a crown?—
Pamper'd princes, whose sole fame
Is on their country's ruin grav'd,
Yet find, within a court deprav'd,
Some venal son of song to raise their name:
Sing Thou the MAN, who fame and throne
Ow'd to no merit but his own;
Who drew from darkness each hid spark of fire,
And, kindling, bade aspire
To greatness' hallow'd seat, its proper zone.

In vain misfortune spreads her veil;
In all their pride thy early conquests rise.
See o'er the giant Alps, which brave the skies,
Their toilsome march thy length'ning legions trail.
Round hanging summits, capp'd in white,
Or where the yawning abyss scares the sight,

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No sound disturbs their fleece-spread way ;
  Save when the wintry monarch throws,
  From off his ice-crown'd brows, a weight of snows ;
Sad, mournful echoes burst, and sighing, die away.
What wonder thee, Bernard, assail'd,
To find thy height-protected ramparts scaled,
  Ere well thy watch had shook their drowsy brows ;
  But, vainly would their arms have sped
Against the YOUTH, when Winter's rage had fail'd,
  Upon his proper reign, and ice-incrusted bed.

He comes ; Italia, bow thy neck ;
  Like Alexander, young and brave.
Wurmser, secure that mountain's break,
  Or all thy army finds a grave !
  Trust not, trust not Mantua's walls !
  The hero comes ;—the city falls ;—
The grey-hair'd chieftain waits his beardless lord ;
He passes on, nor takes th' astonish'd suppliant's sword.
Lo ! the triumphant troops, late perch'd on high,
Like famish'd eagles, gazing at the sky,

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O'er the soft vale, and elmy vineyard spread,
And change, for costly feasts, uncertain bread;
Rags, for rich habits, at th' Italian's cost,
And the poor native pays what Austria lost.

Now, antique Husband of the deep!
Thy wife divorced but mocks thy sleep,
Thy argosies a fire-pile's heap,
Thy glories lost!
And, thro' thy houses' empty tier,
No sounds salute the vacant ear,
But sullen oar of gondolier,
A stranger's cost!
Who has not heard of Venice? who shall hear,
When, from its Lagunes, stalks infection wan?
Some wave-lash'd shaft the sea-mew's lonely nest may bear,
But man shall shun the pestilence of man.

Now, Rome, (thy very name has something great,
That sensitive from aught ignoble flies,)—

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Now, Rome sacerdotal, pour forth, in state,
To greet the modern Cæsar at thy gate,
The gaze of myriads, tho' he shuns their eyes,
As did the old, a crown, at Lupercalia's fête:
Tho' change the times, still man remains;
The very same, he lives, he dies;
Tho' doff'd the toga, he retains,
In vesture short, the heart's disguise,
Oppressing all he can:
Till, sudden 'rous'd, Ambition's instrument, he hies,
The drudge and dupe of Genius he would else despise;
Such paradox is man!

Say, Daughters of the mighty Jove,
From heaven's ambrosial bow'rs descending,
To spread the arts of social love,
And soften man, his species rending,
Inflam'd by lust of gold, worst lust unbending,
Muses, best, sweetest, influences lending,
Say ye, who from Neapolis remove,
And to ignoble fear, and Frenchmen yield?

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The pride of chivalry, the haughty crew,
Of those who boast th' emblazon'd shield ;—
The type of deeds they never knew ;—
Yet walk, as if no worth e'er grew
On other stems, or honour'd other field,
Than what heraldic hung in painted view.

King, princes, nobles, all retire ;
Crowns, truncheons, coronets forgot ;
Ignoble safety, their desire ;
They melt before the conflict hot,
And skulk to isles which waves defend,
And Britain's oaken tow'rs ;
Ah ! Britain, why thy manly vigour lend,
To guard their Paphian bow'rs ?
Who mount Parthenope's abodes,
Tell, too veracious Muses ; gods'
Or men's disgrace ye blushing speak,
When truth your silence dares.—
They, who the shame of manhood make,
Hereditary heirs

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Of all that wretchedness can take,
Thirst, vermin, famine, cares;
Consign'd to want, as soon as born,
Their only house a cave;
The savage would look down with scorn;
Nor brutes, for consorts, have.
Ah! wretches sad! who do not know
Your state extreme of abject wo;—
Who feel the lash; yet, do not cry;—
For whom humanity's too high!
In arms, the Lazzaroni's race appears,
And bursts the torpor of a thousand years.

What to defend? their weeping wives?
Their bleeding sons? their sweethearts dear?
Alas! no tender ties are there;
Promiscuous the embrace; nor lives,
But in the transitory sense a care.—
What to defend? the sunny hill,
Empurpled with the genial vine?

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The mountain blue? the silver rill?—
Enhanced by recollection still
Of infant sports,—of peaceful time?
Alas! alas! they never trod,
Beyond the rock-scoop'd cell, abode
Dark, subterranean, shared with toad.
What to defend? the hanging walls?
High-column'd palaces? and gorgeous halls?
Where luxury, and classic wreck,
The learned lust, and sensual, deck?

No, no;—tarantulas might coil,
Rather than he the pavement soil,
The brute, the Lazzaroni-man:
Yet he his courage brighten can,
While shields of chivalry are thrown away,
To rust upon the clay;
Kings, princes, nobles, gone;
The Lazzaroni left alone:—
To show that man, to crouching want decreed,
In poverty, in scorn, in dust, can rise,

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And show again the vigour of his breed,
  And vindicate, by bravery, the skies;
But sloth, the vampire of the mind, draws on,
And leaves the soul a strengthless skeleton.

Nor these, inglorious, wait
The victors at their lava-gate,
  But on they press, impatient of the fight;
Driven back, defeated, not dismay'd,
Each street a fortress lends its aid,
  And piled-up bodies form a rampart's height.
O shame! Italians, or Sicilians, hear!
Your long disgrace, your only men appear,
Beggars; and for the hand that spurn'd them, dare
To fight, and who denied nought, now deny —
Best gift —life proffer'd; and, slaves born, for freedom
  die.

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CANTO II.

I SEE, I see, upon the Western main,
  Like bees, embattled millions swarm!
Where now, proud YOUTH! thy daring aim?
  Would'st thou against that sea-isle arm?
To Neptune bound, with silver chain?
Beware, proud man, beware!
  Great Julius tried our mettle once,
And left us as we were,
  And vow'd he'd come no more
  Against the iron shore,
Which, conscious of its guardian, hurls a distant lance,
And safe, behind the rising billow, can itself enscance.

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Oh! rather turn

To where, first, Science lit his golden torch,

Ere Greece was yet a name; ere circling porch

To bend could learn,

But, thro' an angle, led

The crowd, to superstition bred:

There all invites thy eager look;

Quench'd is the fire of Mamaluke;

E'en Islamism nods,

And seems to want new gods —

Promethean theft—again.

King! Sultan! Prophet! Priest!

Be each, or all, or what thou pleas't;

See Egypt in thy train:

And never did her fertile shore,

Impregn'd with gods, as strange, as thick,

As do her mud her monsters lick,

So bright a deity produce before.

O, thither, thither, thither, thither,

Thy duteous bands convey;

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O, would'st thou to the regions nether,
That Guard would thee obey:
And mighty names are there, to fire thy soul;—
Sesostris, p'rhaps as mighty chief:
But, ah! his name is *all*, on hist'ry's leaf;
Unless we read the hieroglyphic scroll.
Why, pompous conquerors, pursue
The shadow of a name, with such ado?
The character, engrav'd on adamant,
Confesses still the faithful flint;
But, ah! where is the mind interpreting!
Then, what is immortality?—a thing,
For ever boasted of, not known,—
The fever of the restless spirits,
That urges on to get a stone;
And no one knows who it inherits.

'Twas morn:—the breeze had left the shore;
The sleek chameleon slipp'd his crevice;

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The Arab rubb'd his courser o'er,
  Dismiss'd just from the Pacha's levies ;
The burning sun, upon the sand,
Glow'd, like a furnace, to the hand ;
And, o'er Rosetta's fort display'd,
  The drooping crescent idly hung ;
His bulk the turban'd sentry laid,
  And slept upon the rusty gun ;
  About some Coptic children run,
And with the gunless carriage play'd ;
Beside, sat squatted the rude janizary,
  His pipe alone confessing that he breath'd,
No childish gambols made his heart spring merry,
  His bosom's strings with last night's opium writh'd.

The papyrus rushes rustling were,
Shook by the crocodile, not the air ;
The trophied palm waved not with breeze.
The queen of oriental trees

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Fann'd there no streamlet's rippling course,
But lin'd the Nile's deep, sullen force ;
And led the eye from house to house,
To Cairo, the Victorious.

What ? hoy ! a sail ! a thousand more
Seem crowding to the sandy shore :
Alarm awakes ; confusion spreads ;
The crowd expand their gath'ring heads ;
And tiptoe stands Conjecture gaping ;
The glass applies,
And straight espies
Vast, crowded ships, their surgy way majestic making.

On the hill of Moketan,
Half rubbish ; half, a stately pile ;
Built, too, by no ignoble man,
Great Saladin, tho' Saracen,
A castle shew'd the Moorish style.
A lovely slave, Mah Afrid, in it,

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Counted each slowly ling'ring minute,
And fain would make the moments fly,
By singing to her twinkling spinnet;
Then threw the wretched music by,
And mounted to a turret high,
And cast, o'er Cairo's gilded domes and minarets, her vacant eye.

A busy scene; there Mamlouk spurr'd
His courser, and the djirid threw;
Another shook, with envy fir'd,
His golden trappings to the view;
There, camels jingled their sweet bells,
Their backs high pil'd with foreign freight,
Here, women chat beside the wells;
There, haughty, moustach'd Turk compels
The humble Christian to alight,
From his meek ass that stands beside;
Here, slaves are sold, both black and white;
There, rocks compress the prospect wide;

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But, on the street-like roofs, appear
The groups, who motley turbans wear;
And the Iman chimed, from the mosque's proud state,
Instead of a bell, " that God is great;"
And the charmer play'd his Syren song;
And the painted serpents danced along;
And the rose was there, but it shed no perfume;
Nor the citron flower, because it was noon;
But the soja trail'd its scarlet dye,
And, for want of odour, charmed the eye.
A thousand forms her eyes are seeing,
And the gay interest of being;
And yet, she sighs: — she has a mother,
That nursed her, do her thoughts there rove?
And many a sister, many a brother,
That shared the first fruits of her love:
She sighs: — but yet her sighs are other.

She is a slave, from fair Euphrates' stream,
Snatch'd from amid her playful train,

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Compell'd to quit her native bank,
And on the Nile,
Her sad captivity beguile,
With watching each reminding prank
Of childhood; placid period, made to smile!
She sighs; — but were she freest maid
That e'er in happy Albion stray'd,
She'd seek again the Egyptian bowers:
All — all her thoughts, the captive's hours;
Each spot, but one, her prison-house would be;
Her haram is *her* land of liberty

She sighs; — but 'tis no recollected face
Of parent, kindred, sweet companion, gone: —
She sighs not, cage-bird pining, to retrace
The busy freedom of another's home; —
Her only happiness is, not to roam:
She sighs for—long debarr'd—her master's dear embrace.
For he, that forced her from her native plains,
Had never yet enjoy'd the willing prize;

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Yet, o'er their ardent hearts Love equal reigns,
And mutual is the wish; but Fate denies:
The Sultan's firman long divided both;
But now restores him, Pacha of the South.

Selim sat in the ancient hall,
The Koran wide before him;
Beys, Mufti, Agas, assembled all,
To hear the wise sayings that from his lips fall,—
Each creature — a watch set o'er him: —
And he stroked his black and glossy beard,
And every cause in silence he heard;
And he spoke like a servant of Gabriel's power,
But all his thoughts were the bridal hour.

Mah Afrid has left the crystal bath,
That plays with her charms' shadows gently;
The rich smoke ascends from the perfumes beneath;
The mirrors reflect all her blushes; and wreathe
Her maids her best turban with jewels; and ment'lly

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She dreams, as on sofa she lies,
That Selim, dear Selim, will soon bless her eyes.

O look on that roof, all frosted with art!
O look on the taffety, woven-divine!
O look on the festoons of roses that shine,
And odours enchanting impart!
How beauteous the view, thro' vast galleries prolong'd!
How delicious the coolness the bright fountains sprinkle!
Hear the thousands of birds, which in wires are throng'd!
The singing girl's chant, and the cymbal's soft tinkle!
She hears but her Selim's lost voice in the wind;
She sees but the image she seeks in her mind.

He comes: the black eunuchs announce his approach,
His mantle of sables is cast on the ground,
And she hears the real sound
Of his tongue's music sweet, as he draws to her couch:
"Light of my life! for all was gloom
"Till from those eyes a living ray, —

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" Those soft black eyes, — resplendent shone,
" Of hope, that brighten'd all my way.
" From Istambol at last I come;
" The Sultan has confess'd the doom
" Unjust, that quench'd, the very day
" It first was lit, our tender flame;
" And sicken'd, with a long delay,
" The soft desire of blushing shame.

" Light of my life! in dungeon-tomb,
" Thy bright'ning spirit chased the gloom;
" And, urged to battle, did I spy
" No Houri's blacker, softer eye.
" 'Tis past; 'tis past; we part no more;
" The rose of Schiraz blooms for me:
" I mourn not that the bud's a flower;
" Forgot is long captivity:
" Thy charms were then a crescent moon;
" Thy charms are now a glorious noon."

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She turn'd on him soft, but a look not upbraiding
  Hark! 'tis a gun! what signal is this?
He sprang from her lips, then ruddy, now fading,
  To the opal of wo, from the ruby of bliss;
And he clench'd his scim'tar's Damascan zone,
Dismay'd, as a Schiek from Al Sirat thrown.

A thousand boats are seen to steer
  Towards the Memphian strand;
All fire and eagerness, they bear
  The mighty Chieftain's band:
  Yes; he now treads the self-same sand
His prototype had trod before;
  Nor Alexander, in that land,
Was fear'd or worshipp'd more:
Bright victory his every step pursues,
And willing captives hail him as he goes.

Ye, desert-piles! now left alone,
  Of all the wonders of the past!

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Say, when will YE also be gone,
  Since nought of mortal is to last?
Ye, venerable work of kings unknown!
  Who thought their glory, in your strength, secure;
(Your strength remains;—their glory as the poor
  Dust of the horned victor; which, erst, shone
  In golden coffin shrined, and thence out-thrown,
To bear its tribute to the sandy shore:)—
Look down, and with three thousand winters hoary,
Invoked your presence, lift sublime this Hero's glory!

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CANTO III.

HAIL! Consul of the Gallic men!
Hail! Consul, for two lustres whole!
Hail! Consul, for thy life! again,—
Hail! Emp'ror of the West! what then?
The gracious Muse undoes the scroll;
But all is dark to mortal ken.
Now hydra-faction quell'd, reposes
In chains, beneath thy feet,
And parties all thy presence greet;
Yet, hast thou not a bed of roses,
Nor must thou slumber yet:
Behold! fair Austria, false to thee,
By gold seduced, or struggling to be free,

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Prepares to risk another feat:
Away, anticipate her power,
Nor menace Britain with an idle threat; —
On wonder-stricken arch-dukes, pour
Thy troops' velocious, sudden weight,
And scare the vulture ere it rise.
Behold! thou'rt Schoenbrun's tenant great;
Thy rainbow-banner hies,
And spreads, o'er fall'n Vienna, triumphs to the skies.

Now conquests thicken on the sight,
As fast as stars upon the night,
The muse is lost in wonder;
And strikes the shell upon the ground:—
The feeble echo of the sound,—
The magic of thy thunder,
Great Chief! whose zenith soon will shine,
Superhuman, scarce divine;—
Rays, from all points, thy glory's calling,
To wait its culminating time;
But ah! beware its Western falling!

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Prussia's shackles rivets have,
Her nerves of war are in thy hand;
No second Jenas will she brave,
But sullen bears command.
The sun of Austerlitz has shed
Its beams of brightness round thy head;
And Wagram's trophies stand
A lasting monument, to scare
The German Cæsar from a war,
Which shall divide his land:
Yet art thou not secure;
Thy victories too splendid are to bind;
And think not, with the lure
Of wild romance, again to find
The spectre of some mighty mind,
And make thy slaves endure.

Dark was the night, when their torches each bore
To the solitary tomb appalling;
The wind whistles loud, and the dank torrents pour,
But they heard thy voice them calling:

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And they drew their blades, which they could not see;
And the king, and the emperor, swore to thee
Eternal liege and fidelity: —
But Frederick heard, (the worms o'er him crawling ;)
And he call'd, from the grave, to the monarchs three,
Not to slander his ashes with perjury.

And dost thou still for conquest hanker ?
Oh ! restless spirit of ambition !
And must thou, in Hispania, anchor
Thy bark, e'en to perdition ?
See'st thou not that iron foe,
That dogs thee wheresoe'er thou go,
Now retreating; now pursuing;
Now mocking thee, with hosts entire ;—
And would'st thou thunder on them ruin ?
And would'st thou crush them in thy ire ?
And all thy legions westward urge ?
Behold ! they are upon the surge,
And Neptune's silvery shield thou rueing !

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So, the peasant-churl oft chases
The lanthorn-spectre of the fen;—
Now, now, on it his hand he places:—
Lo! there, it dances up the glen!
Vast Genius! think; we winning lose what's won,
And giants fall, by their own weight undone.

Yet, ah! e'en that is not the key-stone, doom'd
To fall, ere is the pond'rous arch secure;
The torch is in thy family, illumed,
To fire the fabric that thou now think'st sure.
What has thy consort done,
The partner of thy bed, thy throne, thy hours?
Oh! think'st thou to atone,
By greatness graft, thy innate greatness' pow'rs?
Know, Thou hast dar'd be great alone,
Without birth's flare around thee thrown,—
A ne'er forgiven crime!
But thou thyself art criminal, indeed,
To pluck one raylet of the meed
From her, whose all was thine,

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When feebly, first, thy infant feet
  Began the race of fame, and few
The eyes, but hers, confess'd thee great,
  Or, for their future master, knew.
Think, too, how oft her heart hath beat
For thee alone, in battle's heat!
When, from the Alps, thou leap'd'st to glory,
Thy Josephine,—the soldier's story,—
Watch'd, with an anxious look, thy banner;
For thou thyself, not greatness, won her.
And thou upon her bosom hush'd,
  Hast heard the drum the reveille beating;
And thou, with laurels crown'd, hast rush'd
  Back to those arms, thy laurels greeting;
And she has mark'd each swelling vein,
  By midnight-lamp, throb to thy dreaming;
  And seen thee start, and o'er thee leaning,
Kiss'd from thy thoughts, the fancied pain:—
And canst thou leave her, for the vain—
The state-embraces of a titled name?

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Arm! all ye princes of the west!
The king of kings hath dreamt a dream,
Which ye must realize:—no rest,
Till fancied deeds no longer seem,
But are embodied with the best;
Each last the best—the hero's theme.
What life! what bustle! in the plain,
From Venice to the Baltic main;
Lo! kings their sceptres flinging,
They haste to draw the soldier's sword;
They pant to track their eagle lord,
To other quarry winging:
The Czar's proud empire, in their mind, they spoil,
And grasp new titles from the vanquish'd soil:
From Dresden,—where
Kings, emp'rors, are
The living statues of thy presence room;
And doff their state,
Nor deem thee mate;
But, like thy feudal vassals, wait their doom:—

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From that, — thy lofty pinnacle of pride,
Colossus-like, to Asia dost thou stride,
Too mighty prince! nor think'st, what omens there thee
guide.

On Cymry's harp-enliven'd land,
Tremendous, o'er the roaring wave,
Penmaenmawr stands, — a rocky strand,
Of many a sea-lost wretch the grave;
There, buried in a gaping cave,
The billow's foam, and the driven mast,
The samphire green, and the sea-gull, fast
Hastening to its finny repast, —
The only objects that cheer'd his sight, —
Sat Merlin, where he had sat, from night
To night again, and from morn to morn,
Since Cymry's sorrow with England's king
Began, and her joys fell with Lewellin.
The floor-traced cab'la no foot had worn: —

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The cavern was crowded with figures all o'er;
And no king fell, or rose, but the prophet, before,
  Had written his fate in his dwelling.
But now, in vain, he brooding sate,
  And fifty horoscopes had tried,
And wip'd, and wip'd again, his slate; —
  The numbers of the eagle's pride: —
All, — all was dark; he could not see
The self-crown'd king's futurity:
    His talisman was broken,
    The planets gave no token,
And his charms were as vain as the froth of the sea.
He howl'd, in his rage; and he sent for them all:
Not a spirit of hell but obey'd his call; —
  But their lips were seal'd, when he pointed to France.
    At length, tho' his pride
    Was much mortified,
  He order'd his cloudy chair to advance;
And resolved to seek the shadowy being,
Who, in Destiny's book, hath eyes all-seeing.

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This Monster of shadow, with optics finer,
Dwelt on Haardt's mountain; to every miner,
To every peasant, — man, woman, or child;
As familiarly known, as the grass of the wild. —
Behold! great Merlin sailing thro' the air,
His long beard whistling like a comet's hair;
Steering above, and casting down his eyelets,
Where Rhine's fresh currents feed a thousand islets!

Oh! it was a lovely night:
The moon was full, and the flood was high,
And rapid the rushing waters hie,
And burnish each wave, with the stolen light;
And the boatman sang, and his oar kept time;
And the maiden lean'd from her casement nigh,
And she bless'd the song, and the flood, and the sky;
And the raftsman steer'd his floats in a line;
And the flute's soft breath was heard from the shore;
And the hill's red fire just told that the vine
Was ripe, and the plucker's supper was o'er;

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And the organ peal'd, in solemn dirging,
The twilight service of the virgin;
And the spire fantastic seem'd to spring
Into the air, by its self-raised power;
And the waters flew on, and murmuring
Kiss'd many an isle; — a Calypso bower;—
Where a Ulysses might stray to the shore:
But, looking back once, be firm no more;
And feel the dear magic, — no foot stirring;
And the ivy tower and sable wood,
From the precipice flung their shades on the flood;
And the grey mountain lifted its giant brow,
To see if a cloud dimm'd the firmament;
And hush'd was the slightest breeze that could blow
The spangling dew, from the leaflet bent;
And all was serene, without, within,
Till the leaping fish made a splashing din,
Enticed by the flylet's golden wing;
And all the senses slept to the charm:
Or the nose, — or the ear, — or the eye,— stirr'd just,

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Awaked by a cloud of fragrance warm,—
The ripened fruit, or the smell of new must,—
Or the lowing of heifers softly feeding,—
Or the sudden shoot of a starlet bright.
Oh! 'twas, indeed, a lovely night;
The fairest that shone, since the eve of Eden.

A sweet reverie seized the pausing magician;
But the clocks the midnight hour begun;
And he spurr'd on his journey with expedition,
And he stood on Haardt's mountain, before they had done.
On the mountain he stood, and he bow'd him twice;
And not a creature was seen to move;
And he bow'd him a third time, and lo! in a trice,
A figure appears above,
Twice as tall as the tallest pine of the grove;
Who bow'd him to his salute;
And then the spectre stood mute,—

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A giant, in stature; in substance, a shade;
But yet enough to quail the heart
Of the best son of powder that Britain e'er made,
To face the vast guns, that guard Istambol's mart.
Now, Merlin, in silence, his wand raised; and, soon,
Blue flames round the globe of its summit revolve;
Which quiver'd and shone,
An imperial crown;—
The type of the question the shadow must solve.
He knew;
And drew
From the verge of th' horizon, a cloud to the moon;
Like the man's hand, when, from the main
Elijah saw the coming rain:
And, lo! all was darkness,—the night of the tomb.
And lightnings flew,
And the haggard view
Saw a thousand phantoms, amid the deep gloom.
Now, all is darkness again;—
Till the eyes a little altar smote,

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And on it "Patriotism" is wrote,
"Rostopchins," for the beadings, float:
And th' imperial crown is seen to wane,
And up it rises to the name
Of the altar, and is lost in its flame:
Then, a mighty crash, like a comet falling
Upon a world, and the soul appalling,
Is heard, and thunders roll around,
And lightnings flash, and the rocking ground
The fainting mind is to life recalling,
With the hint of an earthquake;—tremendous sound!

'Tis morning; and sweet the sheep-bells tinkle;
And the apron'd damsel escorts the cows;
And the dews of the meadow the hind's feet sprinkle,
As he hastes to his labour, and sings as he goes;
And the bird's lively chirrup is heard from each bush;
And the watch-dog rattles his chain with a sigh;
And the sound of the flail breaks the night's gentle hush;
And the cock shrilly crows from the thatch on high;

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And the aged matron has got her wheel,
And carelessly spins at her cottage door ;
And the ruddy urchin is slow at his meal,
And thinks of the school, and his lesson cons o'er ;
And the pensive nun, and the cowled friar,
March to the altar, and count their beads ;
And the hunter puts on his gay green attire,
And whistles his hounds ; and the fang'd boar bleeds;
And, on the Rhine's surface, a thousand sails spatter,
The dash of the spray, and the dew of the morn;
And the windlasses creak, and the corn-mills clatter;
And the vigour of new life awakes with the dawn:
And not a speck, o'er the memory, came
Of the night's portents, but in demon's brain.

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CANTO IV.

O Muse, how transient is the little gale
That swells Ambition's turgid sail!
And thou hast seen the purple morn,
  Which, in hope's blush, shone gay;
  And fair, and fairer, shed its ray,
Till all its beams the noon-tide hour adorn;
  Yet, quench'd in tempests, ere the setting day:—
And the new-hammer'd keel, which went, dolphin-like,
      sporting,
  Or slept on the waves, as a cradle of pillows,
  Now sunk, in the fury of mountain-raised billows;
Or, tow'd back, a hulk;—not a sail the breeze courting;
Or, fix'd on the breaker, with white foam bespread,
The fisherman's beacon;—the sailor-boy's dread.

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Thou saw'st, O ever-existing power!
Thou quenchless light of the chaos of mind!
Muse, beloved still, in the twilight hour
Of life; but adored, in the youth left behind!
The issuing burst of the Swedish king:
But where was the fruit of the blossoms of Spring?
A blast—from Pultowa;—a ball—from a *friend;*
Were the blight of his conquests; and Charles's end.
The goblet's surfeit,—its secret sting,—
Stopp'd short the Macedonians' vaunted man.
And, while triumphant pæans round him ring,
Great Cæsar rues the stern republican.
Nor less, O Persia! did the conquering lord,
Thy Nadir Schah, lament a kinsman's sword.

But, yet, thy fall is mighty as thy rise,
NAPOLEON,—the desert-lion's strength!—
No blow ignoble prostrate stretch'd thy length;
Thy foe was fate;—her munitions the skies.

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The elements combined
Subdued thy fortune, not thy mind:
Thou would'st have conquer'd, were it man's to quell
The powers of cold;—the penetrating snow,—
And frost ungenial,—and the icy blow
Of Zembla's bleak domain;—the Laplander's drear hell.

Ah! hapless Poland! the Tantalian draught
Of Freedom mocks thee, and the chalice falls!
Lo! Warsaw back her scatter'd sons recalls;
But other winds thence the dictator waft:
And the rich spoil of Muscovite;
The Asiatic dream;—
Too splendid theme!
Makes the free gift deferr'd,—to be forgotten quite.

How bright the glorious enterprize!
What various nations crowd the plain and hill!
How moving columns charm the giddy eyes,
Like vast machines, deep, regular, and still!

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And bursts of solemn music roll;
  And rattling drum, and piercing fife;
  Horse neighing, for the combat rife;
And bugle, swelling on the soul.
Who can withstand that proud array;—
  Dane, Saxon, Swiss, Italian, Prussian, Gaul?
Their flags th' emblazon'd chivalry display,—
  The bright prognostics of the Tartar fall.
Already pierced, the Russian line
  In isolated corps retire;
  Yet deadly is the desp'rate fire,
As strives each broken part to join,
  And form again a mass entire:
Smolensko gave a sample true
Of what, on Moskva's bank, despairing rage could do.

Where meets Moskva's Neglina's smaller stream,
  Great Moscow stands, the Czar's imperial seat,
Unknown, barbarian Power, ere Peter came,
  And gave the Muscovite a name and fleet.

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Splendid, on glittering spires, the sunbeams smote,
And dreams of oriental tales awoke;
But copper domes, and tin magnificence,
Prove the delusion of the cheated sense;
And wealth and poverty together dwell,
The noble's palace, and the serf's mud cell.
Here, gaudy churches rise of painted green;
There, wooden towers jut from basements mean;
O'er timber streets the cumbrous waggons move;
And, here, dead silence holds the firry grove.

Yet, dazzling is the moving line: —
Strangers and habitants appear,
And their native costumes wear, —
A motley group — from ever clime:
The grave Chinese, with glossy tail;
Aleutan's feather-coated male;
The rude Kamtschatkan onward jogs,
Balanced, behind his team of dogs,

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And his consort shakes her peruke's bushy state,
As she bows to the saint, o'er each holy gate;
Samoidian leaves his dwarfish cares,
To sell the mammoth's ivory wares,
And the blest Cashmerian sighs, not to find
The Eden-like vales, — he left behind; —
No fable, the fabled Hydaspes' groves,
And the thousand dyes of the tulip-roofs.
Here, walk the sons of Thibet, where
Seraglios keep of men the fair;
And, there the Cossac, male Amazon,
Who banishes women and strife from the Don;
And the ugly Kalmuc a contrast affords
To the beauteous Georgian's creation-lords;
And the Persian, proud of the colour of Ali,
Passes the native of Lena's bleak valley: —
From the desert of Lop, the Tartar; where
The demon's illusions the traveller bear,
To the horrid brink of some precipice drear;
Then, chant in soft music the pangs of his fear;

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And the Tsshutshi were here, from their earth-sunken
hold,
Saghaliens from Amoor, — a river of gold:
Here life, wild and gentle, its treasures imparts;
The savage, his skins; and the merchant, his arts;
The spoil of the Indian, and Arctic seas;
The pearl, and the amber; and China's teas;
Assembled in Moscow, — the mart of the East,
And all that could please
The senses delighted; — a mental feast.

Why come not forth the City's prime?
Behold! at hand the conquering Gaul!
Where are the pond'rous keys that shine?
The robes of civic festival?
Hush'd is the market's buzzing din; —
No rattling wheel resounds: — 'tis strange!
For some surprise, they lurk within;
Some preparation vast arrange?—

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And not a living object waits
  The streets; — an awful solitude; —
  Late echoing to the busy crowd: —
Each entering foot reverberates.

The Frenchmen stand, with wonder mute,
  And think some Genii's thundering tone; —
(As stones gave life the Amphion lute;)
  Hath turn'd the living town to stone.
They enter in the solemn fane,
  Where kings, in hillocks, strew the floor; —
  The saint still guards the ample door:
The incense-censer smokes in vain.
The spit yet turns; — the viands smoke; —
  But not a host to greet a guest: —
  The goblet stands, to cheer the feast;
And dishes bend the board of oak.
They enter where the toilet stands;
  The mirror shews no lady fair,

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But sudden flash of soldier bands ;
Such as, till then, ne'er enter'd there.

Oh ! haste from the city, ye conquerors staring !
That city accursed is your bane, and your tomb ;
Hark ! the shout of the demons, with torches wide flaring ;
Hear the crackle of flames, which enlighten the gloom !
On the top of the Kremlin, Napoleon stood,
And he view'd the bright sea of the flaming wood,
But his heart was fix'd, and his eye was stern ;
And not an emotion the gazers discern.
But ye shall sigh for that burning fire,
Ye troops, aghast at your fortune's ire !
Yes ; ye shall sigh, in the pitiless frost,
For the cheering brand of a Moscow lost.

Hark ! they retreat : — but it is too late ;
Already begun is the campaign of Fate.
The winds blow hollow ; the floods swell high ;
And the clouds lie broke in the reddening sky :

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Yet, spoilers they came, and spoilers they go;
But that spoil they shall scatter in deserts of wo;
And Ivan's cross, which, in triumph, they mock,
They shall cast, as a token of shame, in some loch.—
The tempests are hush'd, and the skies are clear;
But the frost is binding the crystal of air;
And a fleecy mantle is cast on their path;
And the blast of Siberia commences its wrath.
The cattle forsake the motionless wheel,
  And stagger, and fall; and the cannon's a post;
The torpor of death o'er the hush'd senses steal,
  And the ice-stiffened limb is unheededly lost.

The fire of the soldier no longer is found;
His musquet is hurl'd, and his knapsack unbound;
His heart is grown frozen, as cold as the wind,
And he leaves his old comrade of Egypt behind.
Lo! the Hettman of Cossacs appears in his rear;
Yet, what, for existence, or honour, his care?

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For a bumper of brandy, his eagle he'd sell;
Nor, for warmth, refuse plunging in Etna's bright well.
Lo! the flame crackles lively;—the bivouac is raised;—
But the enemy's banner appears in the waste:
He flies;—or refusing,—still rubbing each member,
With his heart's blood, he quenches the dearly bought
ember.
Yet, while all is surrender'd, that clogs the brute will;—
One sole care is sacred;—"'tis his Emperor still:"—
His form, like an angel's, consoling and sweet,
All troubles disperses;—the Compeer of Fate!
A shout marks his presence;—the bayonets gleam;—
And the enemy scampers, as fast as he came.

'Twas then, amid the howling blast,
A mother lock'd her baby fast,
In gentle slumber smiling;
The ridging snow;—a cap;—was spread;
Its limbs a piece of blanket hid;
Its placid face beguiling,

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The slippery path, and anxious hour;
But, while the mother's look hung o'er
Its temples soft, her thoughts thus bore
Their course, her senses spoiling.

" And canst thou sleep? — and hast thou smiled? —
" Ah! whither roves thy little fancy?
" Bleak is the blast of the wilderness wild;
" And the Cossac would snatch from my hands thee.
" Thou know'st not the icicle moves with thy breath;
" And the snow on thy forehead is placing,
" As pure as thy thoughts are, a chaplet of death;
" And the milk of thy fountain is freezing.
" Thou hearest not the howl of the pitiless wolf,
" Nor the cry of the horse he is tearing;
" Thou see'st not what horrors my footsteps engulph,—
" The deep cavern's glen, smooth appearing.
" My bosom yet nurtures the spark that's in thine;
" By its heat, thy soft members are warmed:

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"But, soon, shall it quench'd be, for ever, in mine,
"And tombless our limbs lie embalmed:
"And sweet is thy sleep; for thou dream'st not the woes,
"That fill thy lost mother, — to harm thee: —
"Oh! could'st thou but guess once the bitters of those,
"No syrup, — no poppies, — would calm thee!
"Nor hast *Thou* seen, baby, the pleasures of France,
"Or the tear to thy eyelids would rally.
"O land of my mothers! who leads now the dance?—
"Must I ne'er again see thy green valley? —
"Yet, I might:—but this burden forbids me to try?—
"What frenzy of life do I cherish!
"Lie there, precious burden! since both cannot fly;
"Thou hast not seen France, and can'st perish."

Thus sobbing, down laid she th' unconscious load,
And she could not look in its innocent face;
For her heart was rent, tho' her words were rude;
And she ran, to regain, on the waggon, her place

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But the horror-struck crowd, from her touch, retire;
And a gunner,—whose heart ne'er knew pity before;
Who had been at the sacking of Pavia; and bore
Unmoved the shrill shrieks of the women; whom fire,
Nor slaughter affected; whose face ever wore,
In its powder hues, the fierce aspect of ire;—
Now stoop'd, and, with soothings, the crying babe took,
From its snow-mantled cradle, and gently shook;
Then, loosen'd his cloak from his shoulders, fain;
And wrapp'd the adopted child in its train.

And canst thou, now, escape, surrounded Chief?
Behold, with arms, the rocky passes shine!
That guard unshaken move;—the last relief;
A moving shield;—surround thee, as their shrine,
Slow, firm and frowning; for their safety's thine.
The daunted enemy, so rife before,
Stand to their piled-up arms no more;

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But, from their fastness peeping,
Perceive, with awe, the gloomy host;—
And borne amidst,—that Chief—their boast;—
A phalanx cautious creeping:
Nor dare, e'en with a single shot, to press,
Or stop, the solemn march of stern distress.

Now art thou safe;—thy foes behind;—
But where is He "brave of the brave?"
Away thy truncheon to the wind,
And grasp the guiding sword to save:—
What are sceptres, crowns, dominion?
Heroes live, but in opinion:—
Didst thou leave thy Ney to perish,
Who, in mem'ry, thee would cherish?—
He leaves him not;—the safety gain'd
He spurns, and seeks his comrade lost:—
Already is the foe recross'd,
And, in the meshes self-enchain'd,

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Napoleon seeks, in wilds of frost,
His rear, and chieftain snow-detain'd.
They found,—and would ye pen him yet?—
For lions strong must be the net:—
He bursts the toils; and joyful shouts proclaim,
Their emp'ror, gen'ral, honour, safe again.

Escaped from the climate, and foe's deadly wrath;
The dangers but thicken, besetting thy path:
Where is that bright army that follow'd thy beck.
That forest of horsemen? the ordnance' vast train?
Ah! those cannons but track thy lost steps in the plain!
Scarce a lancer is left, to conceal the foul wreck!
Thy allies but plot, now o'erthrown, to enchain!
Yes; now, they delib'rate; now, fix, unsteady;—
But the eagle is flown, ere the cage is got ready.

And Paris sees, with glad surprise,
Again her emp'ror bless her eyes;—
And, o'er domestic treason,

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His giant-foot is placed, and flies
His hopeful banner to the skies,
The promise of a season
Of future triumphs :—but, in vain,
He strives, at Dresden, to regain
That Fortune's smile, whose fickle face
Turns from her fav'rite's disgrace:
All fly the setting orb of day;
All court his rising ray ;—
And Leipsic fills,
With dire dismay, the bitter cup of Gallic ills.

But still thou fight'st, and still thou dar'st,
And still the awed opponent scar'st;
Tho' small thy force, thy energy,
Like Sampson's bursts the binding tie ;
Where'er thy steps, there, rout attends ;—
At every point, thy vigour rends :—
So, in the unmown meads of palmy bound,
The wily she—the elephant allures ;

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And new-twined rope his bulky strength secures :
But, when the hunters' joyous shouts resound,
The indignant captive turns him round ;—
The smoking flax confesses, frail,
The trunky Monarch of the Indian ground ;
And sycamores uprooted scare the hunters pale.

Yet, thou must fall ; for, lo ! thy chiefs desert thee,
Unmindful of each princely gift :
Ingratitude alone could hurt thee ;
That, of thy wonted fortitude, bereft —
Ingratitude, with marble heart !
Gods and men alike disown thee ;
Monster all confess thou art ;
Yet, by face, have never known thee :
How terrible must thy foul visage beam,
Since hideous, hid ; thou deem'st, more hideous, seen !
Thou canst not bear the black'ning stain : —
Who gav'st them kingdoms, bad'st them reign ;

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In all their hazards mingled: —
To be deserted, at the last,
Betray'd, surrender'd, all thy past
Glory, with blottings sprinkled!
The infamy's not thine: what canst *thou* do?
Hide, blushing France! *thy* shame, the stain of Fontainbleau!

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CANTO V.

WHERE Snowland lifts its craggy side
  Against the iceberg's crashing rage,
And sees, amid the ocean wide,
  The melancholy whaler wage,
With harpoon barb'd, the finny war,
Or steer alarm'd his bark afar,
Just furl'd, — to cast the point askance
  Of anchor, in some monster's jaw; —
  A Seer lay rapt in swoon, or trance; —
  His silver beard a rustling sound
  Gave dismal, as the rocky bound
Echo'd the wind's fantastic dance; —

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Around him, shone the cliffs of glass,
  Reflecting the volcanic glare
Of Hecla's sudden flames, — which pass
  Away again — again to flare.
No tree its verdant foliage spread,
To guard the Prophet's hoary head;
  No grass reposed his aged limbs;
The scattered tuft of moss affords
A couch for bears, — the island's lords;
  And here, and there, a blue light swims,
  Or fixes, round the shining rims
Of high basaltic pillars grey;
While mock-suns at a distance play,
Blue, yellow, red, and cast below
A weaker image on the snow;
And, ever and anon, the rock
Shook, trembling with some inward shock;
And fire-balls shoot amid the air,
Or roll upon the level bare.

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Here, mountains rise, and clouds conceal
Their summits high ; or, sunk, reveal
The shining pinnacles which rise,
From vap'rous temples, to the skies :
High, o'er the rest, bleak Hecla towers,—
The sovereign of the rocky powers.

Full fifty times, the signal gun
Of nature's ordnance, bade to foam
A hundred fountains' gushing streams :
Full fifty times, a rainbow's beams
Shone, from the red volcano's blaze ;
And boiling smoked, a thousand ways,
The streams from crevices below : —
And, fifty times, the Geyser's flow
Had launch'd its heated column high ;
Which fell, in showers, from the sky : —
Still slept the Seer, — no sleep of death ; —
His breast rose high, and strong his breath ;

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And, oft, with strong convulsion bent,
His sinewy arm smote hard the flint; —
Now, op'd his mouth; — his words were air; —
Now, scarce articulate they were,
But sounds; and, now, compress'd to sense,
This meaning to the ears dispense.

" What rustling of a mighty pinion,
" Breaks the seething of the surge!
" What Condor seeks his lost dominion; —
"" But not from Andes' lofty verge?
" What flutter marks his airy travels!
" Hark! the wild fowl, how they cry!
" How the vultures cease their revels,
" As their master passes by!
" How they try, to tempt some bolder
" Bird of ravage, to surprise!
" Yet, how the weaker fires smoulder,
" Before the lightning of his eyes!

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" Transplant that lofty Flower, of sickly hue;
" Too vig'rous, now, the soil in which it grew: —
" Haste; bear it far; —
" Fit for some sombre, monkish wall,
" Or the frail jar,
" Of some seraglio's gaudy hall;
" Let the jesuit guard its charm,
" Or fondled be 't, in lady's palm.
" The bird of rapid wing
" Tracks it, by the scent of Spring,
" And quick unearths the heavy root;
" But yet disdains to feed: —
" The plant his ponderous beak and talons shoot,
" Far, from its native soil; — a costly weed. —
" Brightest tenant of the air!
" Vainly rustles thy proud pinion!
" Tho' it death and terror bear,
" It shall find, — to lose, — dominion!"

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How smoothly plows the brigantine
  Its trackless furrow on the deep!
With bright hope, fair the streamers shine,
  Above the Chief from Elba's steep; —
  And he — is calmly hush'd in sleep: —
Yet, did his eyelids never close,
Since first the lofty project rose,
  Till now completion's transports peep:
Now, still his bosom seeks repose.
Yet, where are left thy num'rous host?
Or, do they first implant the coast,
With bristling spears, and proud array,
And smooth the roughness of thy way?
O Chieftain ever prudent! say.
No petty monarch is thy foe,
  The promise of Capetian kings;
To conquer millions, is a blow,
  Not held among the meanest things:
And, yet, thou lead'st, in thy three-vessel'd fleet,
But a thousand hands, for this conquest great: —

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Some frock'd village-may'r may the tocsin sound,
And a parish's peasants thy army surround.

Yet, in silence, he lands, and still forward he goes;
Nor his mighty mind quails with disastrous thought.
Thro' hamlets, towns, cities, his progress is wrought,
By those strong fascinations, which Genius sole knows.
From steeple to steeple, the eagle hies,
And shouting crowds follow him with their eyes;
Not a hand to stop, not a voice to stay,
The MAGUS of men to imperial sway:
Yet, now, for combat a few prepare;
The cannon is levell'd; the matches lit;—
But where is the army equipp'd for fight?
Must they with three warriors wage the war?
Behold they come:—'tis their *Corporal* bland,
To shake his old messmates by the hand.

Yet, tho' fair Gallia owns thy sway once more;
Tho' Bourbon-strangers hasten from the land;

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And all within the realm confess command,
How dark the tempest that surrounds thy shore!
Think'st thou, the world can ever bear
So bright a star within its sphere,
Nor quiver at its rays?
Thou hast o'ershone the mighty ones:
The souls eclipsed forgive not:—sun's
Full orb must set, not blaze.
And thou, O mighty man, too great!
Must fall, beneath assembled nations' hate.

As o'er the tropic surge, the burning sky
A speck obscures—a cloud—a vap'rous eye;
And the sage mariner's steadfast gaze informs,—
A little harbinger,—of mighty storms:—
Sudden, from every point, the whirlwinds dark
Drive their black tributes to its central mark;
And, rattling, roaring, thund'ring, light'nings sweep;
And heaven itself seems pouring to the deep.

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So, from all France, Napoleon's energies
Call up th' ingredients of a war's supplies :—
The bustling troops, from ev'ry quarter, move,
To greet the only sov'reign of their love.

The soldier-king sat on a gorgeous throne,
Not trusting to the splendours of his mind
Alone ; so weak is dazzled human kind,
It homage pays to fancied worth alone,—
The gems, and glitt'ring baubles, deeply mined.
Millions assembled to the martial field :
Some few, indeed, reluctant homage yield ;
But the vast multitude,—a willing heart ;
Some,—from mere vanity to fill a part.
So pompous ;—their consent besought to wield
The sceptre of authority :—to gaze,
The happier number, ever fond to gape ;—
There ever found, where something to amaze,
Or Bourbon, Buonaparte ; giraffe or ape :

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Some—to adore a lady's eyes;
And some to gather food to prate;—
Some,—their thin wardrobe's new supplies
To show; and some, their staff of state;—
The painted eagle scarcely hiding
The lilies of the new-wash'd ground;
Yet known;—because, in shouts, them hiding,
To vaunt their loyalty,—just found.
All these assembled on the warlike plain,
Tho' perjured, their allegiance to declare:
Hark the long, deaf'ning shout, "I swear!"
The cannon thunders it again;
And heaven, in echoes, iterates the strain.

Behold! from file to file, from troop to troop,
A pensive WARRIOR hies;
His brow, no bright'ning gleam of hope,
To cheer his men, supplies;
Yet, firm his mien;—and firm were they;
Tho', like their chiefs, their sadness strange is,—

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Companions of the gloomy day,
And bright, of many a campaign's changes;
But now, no thought of conquest high:—
Yet, what of that?—they mean to die.

Hark! hark! the solitary note!
The KING of battle gives the signal:—
In his proud hopes no droopings mingle;—
His ready bands, for combat hot,
Already to their foes have got;
And e'en these words the lips prophetic pass'd,
"I have these Islanders at last."

When will the weary fight be over?
Still roar forth the brazen throats—
Fell destruction's dismal notes;
Gory clots embrown the clover;
Heaps of slain the red dykes cover:
Sabres crossing, what a clashing!
Thrust to thrust,—the dreadful play:

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Horse and rider, cuirass crashing;
Still they struggle in the clay!

Firmly the stubborn squares maintain their ground,
And spend the fury of each bursting host;
Some, mountain-bred, afford a ghastly mound,—
Their stiffen'd corpses, faithful to their post.
"But all's not lost; behold my guard!"
The cloud of thunder slowly rolls.
But,—"all is lost,"—the echoed word:
Confusion dances in their souls.
That guard, that never quail'd before,
Now, seek their safety in their flight:
It was the god of rout that, o'er
Their heads, shook terror's night;—
That nameless power,—so tremendous known,
Whose head is never seen;—whose arm is felt alone.

The cup is dash'd;—the knell is rung,
For ever, of thy pow'r:—thy glory

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Must live;—but 'tis the heroes' story;—
Of Hannibal from Zama fled.—
And thou shalt brighten, these among;
Yea; o'er them, lift a haughty head.
Thrice happy Chief of Waterloo!
Thou hast o'erthrown, who all o'erthrew;—
Insult not Greatness, fallen too!
Nor stain, with rancour's gall, that brilliant wreath,
Which victories the final Victor's brow bequeath
Sapor subdued, by Fate's fiat,
The Roman strength, and Roman king;
And of Valerian made a thing;—
A stepping stone;—in riot
Of a weak bosom triumphing:
Thou, prudent Fabius of our state!
Than he, a thousand times, more great!
But, greater, mightier, than thou,
The chief thy fortune has laid low:—
Wert thou, on Him, a foot's disparagement to place,
Not the whole realm of Spain, thou saved'st, would save
thee from disgrace

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Behold! he comes to Britain's shores, —
A suppliant, not a conqueror now;
He grasps her hearths, and low implores
The shelter of a liberal foe:
As, erst, the Persian king Themistocles
Besought, and got an evening's tranquil ease.
And thou, no doubt, great Wellington didst plead,
And urge the right of Greatness, to demand
Respect, e'en from a conquering land; —
And thou didst read the future page
Of history unbiass'd, where
Unmisted truths shine as they are; —
But the cold ear of policy, or rage,
Refused to list thy noble prayer.

On the lofty deck, appears
The exiled Warrior's sober beam; —
In every eye, are gushing tears;
His only are serene.
And must they leave, — to see no more, —
Their king, — condemn'd to torrid shore? —

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O, yet, he may select, to share
His woes, a few! — Who happy are?
Who may obtain the precious end
Which virtue seeks, — to be a friend; —
And, voluntary, share the last
Griefs, — as they shared the pleasures past; —
No reward; — but, in the mind;
And, in the silent homage of their kind.

The boatswain's whistle! — all hands aloft: —
  The bellying canvass flaps its length;
The cable creaks, and, pendant-aft,
  The ponderous anchor's teethy strength.
She moves: — the vessel is under weigh; —
The breezes blow, and the billows play;
The crowded boats return to the shore;
  Their heads are bare, and their kerchiefs wave,
  And they strain the nerves of their sight to have
The last look of the freight she bore: —
The soldier, skill'd in the martial arts;
And more; — the Emperor of their hearts.—

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Now, the forms are lost of the peopled poop ;

To a boat's, the vessel's dimensions stoop ;

And, now, the hull declines o'er the foam ;

And, now, the tall mast, and the sails are gone.

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CANTO VI.

WHERE, now, Proud Bird! that beak of thunder?
That wing, which broke whole realms asunder?
Where thy eye's lightning,
The nations bright'ning? —
Those talons which, strong as Alcides' wrist,
Tore half the world, and shook the rest? —
Alas! confined, what boots thy rage? —
Lo! owlets peck thee, in thy cage!
Nor vainly beat, Imperial Bird, thy wires;
Fate's adamantine hand has seal'd the door:

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No more to heaven thy wing sublime aspires;
Henceforth, the Muse alone shall bid thee soar:
Calm, then, thou mighty Spirit! rest, nor deem
Severe, who hast borne the sea, the rumpling of a stream.

Yet, must thou mourn, great Chief! the sad reverse;
No common loss is thine;
Thy infinite design
Threw its vast net around the universe,
Whose face thy fiat changed, terrestrial god!
And crowns were fix'd, or shaken, at thy nod.
Alas! where now the martial herd?
The flash of cuirass? and the golden bird?
The waving plumes — the nodding crest?
That shone, transcendent o'er the rest.
A beacon to the eye,
Prognostic of the fervid din,
And bade thee win,
Tho' fix'd the foe resolved to die.

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Where, now, the rattling of the drum ?
To council, as to battle won,
The never-failing signal given.
The awe ? as to the seer of heaven ? —
What power thy train of kings has driven ?—
Anointed by that hand, that snatch'd the iron wreath,
From the amazed pontiff; whom, erst, beneath,
The proudest emperors the stirrup held,
Too mean, — their stepping stones, — to be beheld.
O fall, nought fit, but archangel's, compared !
  Ambition's golden sun ! how art thou set !
  A total darkness — without twilight — yet
More black than Egypt's night, both felt, and fear'd !

To pore upon the restless wave,
Is now thy occupation grave,
      And view the penguin flapping ;
To list the elemental war,
And mark the whitening surge afar,
      The cloud the welkin wrapping : —

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To trace a speck upon the ridge,
That skirts the sky and ocean's edge,
And see it with the breezes jutting,
Enlarging more and more,
Till, on the eye, it pour
A ship majestic, the spurned foamers cutting.
The artillery of the skies alone,
Remind thee of thy thunders past;
The lightning of the azure dome
Thy triumphs; — not to last: —
The billows swell them from the shore,
Whence they shall never waft thee more:
Those rocks for ever, moveless, hold thee fast.

Yet, why not fill the gen'rous bowl,
And sooth, with copious draughts, thy soul?
As did the son of Libyan Jove,
And Pyrrhus, mighty chiefs:
Thy name shall shine above,
While age's wheels oblivious roll

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O'er theirs, and their reliefs,—

The grape, the fair, and Persia's burning griefs.

Thou art immortal;—while a pen

Can write, or read admiring men;—

While blooms a flow'r;—while bends a blade;—

While water undulates;—while trees, a shade;

Or stars the navigator lend

Aid; or the midnight-watcher's eyes attend.

Fly to the mem'ry of the past;

Think of the thousands that shall cast

Their eyes on thy bright deeds, which shall for ever last.

'Tis vain; 'tis vain;—ah! who can know

The pang of fallen angel's wo!

Now, lifted o'er the world supreme;

Now, nothing—or an idle dream!

Now, dealing sceptres; now the scorn

Of baser spirit, jailer-born:

Each day recalling triumphs gone;

Each day reminding now alone.

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Or, if new glories must be won;
Alas! upon a table's zone,
To lead an iv'ry host to war,
With pointed finger; which, afar,
Could millions take
Of living heroes, reckless hurl'd,
Upon the chessboard of the world;—
A realm, the stake:
Now, mimic queens alone confess thy reign;
And chessmen-monarchs wear the crown of Charlemagne.

The broad leaf of the cabbage tree,
Is now thy only canopy;
The furze, thy footstool's majesty;
The spider weaves thy tapestry;—
Yet, not, for this, grieve, philosophic King!
Thou own'd'st thy throne of wood before;
The silk-worm's product warm'd thy floor;
And gold would imitate the flower,—
But feebly imitate the living thing.

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But, yet, thou grievest; and why? —
Because thy sod shall freshen with the sky?
Nor the vain fabric of a stone be lifted high?
Because thou would'st embalm'd, with Charles the Great,
  Yet struggle with corruption's power, below?
  Enrich some idle virtuoso's curious show? —
Or feel, beneath the tomb, the curse of hate!
Or, that thou would'st, with Rollo laid,
A penny spectacle — be paid, —
    Amidst a thousand shrines;
The hero and the conqueror lost; —
A saint, — by devotees be cross'd,
    And guard the offences' fines? —
Or, doth thy noble spirit pine, to deem
How far away the world's imperial Queen? —
That ruled the nations, first, by arms; again,
More stern, by superstition's faster chain;
And, now, rules o'er our magic-captured hearts,
By noble recollections, and her arts; —
Rome! mighty name! metropolis of all!

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There, would'st thou fain,
With Cæsars, reign
O'er the dark ruins, that the past recall?
Yet, would thy all-engrossing spirit fall,
There, short of universal empire;—
Thou could'st but share a part—that part but small —
Of her dust worshipped; but, here, entire
Thou bear'st the globe of memory:—no shock
Of time, or earthquake can erase thy name from Helen's rock.

No crews,—which leave the jealous port
Of China's stranger-hating land;
Who, for her sober crop, resort;
A leafy harvest, quelling drought,
Not stealing, o'er the senses, bland:—
No ship,—that bears the plunder'd wealth
Of wretched Hindoos, slaves to sense,
To sap, at home, a nation's health,
And vindicate a Providence,
That makes a scourge of the offence: —

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No keel—that, light with pearly freight,
Shoots o'er the billows' foaming height:—
No sail—that, from the dubious shore
Of Araby, the rich, or poor,
Bears the berry's fragrant store,
From pirates free;
And shuns the Madagascan band;
Melinda, drawn as fairy land;
Doubling the Caffre's stormy strand;
But looks to thee,
Great Isle! the prison of a giant head!
Helena! henceforth, consecrated dust!
For his with thine commingle must,
And all be trod with awe, lest *his* we tread.

O think not, banish'd Chieftain, thee forgot,
Tho' far from France, and all that is refined;
Its very loneliness shall raise that spot,
Above the tow'rs, where Martel lies enshrined.

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A pompous fun'ral honour'd Cæsar's fate,
And foes, in pageantry, conceal'd their hate:—
Long stain'd the headless trunk of Egypt's guile,
  Great Pompey stabb'd, the guilty Memphian strand;
  Scarce could be found, for him, a menial hand,
To lift the unwept, solitary pile:—
Say, now, what covers Cæsar's dust?
  Tell if, in Rome, I stand upon its verge?
What fragment speaks, now, of his fallen bust?
Ye powers just!
  P'rhaps Tiber's waters urge
His restless particles, with Auster's fitful gust.
But every seaman lifts his eye
To Pompey's column'd record high;
And points the helmsman to the sign.—
And, so, to thee,
Far struggling with th' unruly sea,
Each eye shall look; and, mid the gloom,
Track the vast outline of thy rocky tomb.—
And single shalt thou reign,

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Upon th' Atlantic main,
Nor mix, with meaner thoughts, thy recollection lone.

Yea; pining Chief! that very rock
Was raised for thee, by nature's shock:—
When Neptune pass'd, of yore,
In long procession, o'er the deep;
And, from Cape Verde, betook him o'er,
Where glooms the Table-Mountain steep;
Tired of a scene of endless green,
Amphitrite ask'd for land:
And, straight, at his command,
The lightnings gleam; amidst is seen
A rocky, and ungenial strand.—
"Is this a cradle of repose?"
Enquires the discontented fair:
"Are these the bowers, where Love would choose,
"To chase awhile our care?"—
"No other, here, the Fates permit;
"For, here, a warrior-king shall lie;

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" His granite tomb shall mock the sky,
" When Egypt's pyramids are split,
" And shiver'd, in the desert, raise the sand on high."
Thus growl'd the murmurs of the watery god :—
And Thou, Great Chief, must lie, beneath its briny sod.

Hark! hark! the trump!—but it sounds "He is fled:"—
Hark! hark! the drum! — 'tis the march of the dead .—
See! see! his proud steed! — but he's riderless led :—
List! list! the salute! — but 'tis fired o'er his head.
Is He gone? — has the Meteor shot forth all its fire?—
Cease, then, ye nations, your impotent ire. —
His star has done blazing; but, higher it rises;
Now, fix'd in the heavens' magnificent arch,
It marshals its planets, and crown'd
With starlets around,
A system's bright centre, controls their proud march :
While science terrestrial is lost in surmises,
And blesses new optics, to Herschels gives prizes,
And thinks a lost Sirius has shone to its search.

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EPITAPH,

FOR MY MOTHER'S GRAVE-STONE, AT LEWISHAM.

Blest Mother! when serene I knelt to thee,
In the calm hour of spotless infancy,
Thou join'dst my little hands, and badest be given
All my best wishes to the care of Heaven, —
Thou taught'st me, first, in still, small voice to pray,
And told'st me every whisper found a way: —
Blest saint! hear then, among the blessed quire,
Whose ear ne'er falter'd to thy Son's desire! —
That, when the cistern's broken wheel shall cease,
And the glad soul from drudgery release,
I may again thy gentle features trace,
And recognize, in heaven, thy fond embrace;
Nor claim I more, amid the joys above,
Than childhood's innocence, — a mother's love.

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WOMAN'S LOVE.

YES; thou hast loved, and loved in vain;
And I, the cruel cause of pain:
Yes; often has the lone tear stole;
'Twas my hard heart that bade it roll.
And I have slept, when sleep left thee,
Thy spirit sad;—and all for me:
Forgive, forgive:—*no woman can;*—
But she's a saint, when she loves man.

Alas! we act by contraries,
We love, because we should despise:
Ariadne, left upon the shore,
But loved her vile deserter more;

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Had he but *look'd*,—no past alarms —
No waves, — had kept her from his arms.
Ah! what to crush your hearts avails,
Fond sex! since hard unkindness fails?

Yes; there 's a world of endless bliss,
To cure the broken hearts of this; —
There woman's burning soul respires,
Without distrust, her cherish'd fires;
No virgin's wish is breathed in vain,
But ev'ry sigh floats back again;
E'en *man* forgets to rove, above,
And all is truth, — as Woman's Love.

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